

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please **amend** Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 59, 76, 107 and 165; **cancel** Claims 2, 6, 9-16, 23, 25-57, 60-64, 68, 70-74, 77-79, 83-88, 90-106, 109-111, 115-120, 122-164, 166-167, 171, 173-175, 177-184 without prejudice; and **add** Claims 185-190 such that the pending claims read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A conveyor system adapted for use in delivering substrate carriers within a semiconductor device manufacturing facility comprising:
a ribbon that forms a closed loop along at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility, the ribbon adapted to:
be flexible in a horizontal plane and rigid in a vertical plane; and
transport a plurality of substrate carriers within the at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility[{}];
wherein the ribbon comprises:
a vertical portion adapted to support substrate carriers; and
a horizontal portion that extends outward from the vertical portion so as to create a supporting surface adapted to support a weight of the ribbon.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently Amended) The conveyor system of claim [[2]] 1 wherein the vertical and horizontal portions are formed ~~from~~ from a single piece of material.
4. (Currently Amended) The conveyor system of claim [[2]] 1 wherein the vertical and horizontal portions are formed from separate pieces of material.
5. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 4 wherein the horizontal portion comprises a plurality of horizontal sections coupled to the vertical portion.
6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The conveyor system of claim [[2]] 1 wherein the horizontal portion comprises a plurality of slots adapted to increase flexibility of the ribbon in a horizontal direction.

8. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 7 wherein the plurality of slots are evenly spaced along the ribbon.

9 - 16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 1 wherein the ribbon comprises stainless steel.

18. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 1 wherein the ribbon comprises a vertical portion having a first feature adapted to identify a beginning of the ribbon.

19. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 18 wherein the first feature comprises at least a first opening formed through the vertical portion.

20. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 18 wherein the vertical portion of the ribbon further comprises a plurality of second features, each second feature adapted to identify a location at which a substrate carrier may be held and transported by the ribbon.

21. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 20 wherein each second feature comprises at least a second opening formed through the vertical portion.

22. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 21 wherein the at least a first opening comprises a first plurality of openings and wherein the at least a second opening comprises a second plurality of openings.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of supports rigidly coupled to the ribbon, each support adapted to support and transport a substrate carrier within the at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility.

25 - 57. (Canceled)

58. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 1 wherein the ribbon is adapted to transport single substrate carriers.

59. (Currently Amended) A conveyor system adapted for use in delivering substrate carriers within a semiconductor device manufacturing facility comprising:
a ribbon that forms a closed loop along at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility, the ribbon adapted to:
be flexible in a horizontal plane and rigid in a vertical plane;
transport a plurality of substrate carriers within the at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility; and
continuously rotate[.];
wherein the ribbon comprises:
a vertical portion adapted to support substrate carriers; and
a horizontal portion that extends outward from the vertical portion so as to create a supporting surface adapted to support a weight of the ribbon.

60 - 64. (Canceled)

65. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 59 wherein the ribbon comprises stainless steel.

66. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 59 wherein the ribbon comprises a vertical portion having a first feature adapted to identify a beginning of the ribbon.

67. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 66 wherein the vertical portion of the ribbon further comprises a plurality of second features, each second feature adapted to identify a location at which a substrate carrier may be held and transported by the ribbon.

68. (Canceled)

69. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 59 further comprising a plurality of supports rigidly coupled to the ribbon, each support adapted to support and

transport a substrate carrier within the at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility.

70 - 74. (Canceled)

75. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 59 wherein the ribbon is adapted to transport single substrate carriers.

76. (Currently Amended) A conveyor system adapted for use in delivering substrate carriers within a semiconductor device manufacturing facility comprising:
a ribbon that forms a closed loop along at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility, the ribbon adapted to:
be flexible in a horizontal plane and rigid in a vertical plane; and
continuously rotate; and
a plurality of supports rigidly coupled to the ribbon, each support adapted to support and transport a substrate carrier within the at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility[[]];
wherein the ribbon comprises:
a vertical portion adapted to support substrate carriers; and
a horizontal portion that extends outward from the vertical portion so as to create a supporting surface adapted to support a weight of the ribbon.

77 - 79. (Canceled)

80. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 76 wherein the ribbon comprises stainless steel.

81. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 76 wherein the ribbon comprises a vertical portion having a first feature adapted to identify a beginning of the ribbon.

82. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 81 wherein the vertical portion of the ribbon further comprises a plurality of second features, each second feature adapted to identify a location at which a substrate carrier may be held and transported by the ribbon.

83 - 88. (Canceled)

89. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 76 wherein the ribbon is adapted to transport single substrate carriers.

90 - 106. (Canceled)

107. (Currently Amended) A conveyor system adapted for use in delivering substrate carriers within a semiconductor device manufacturing facility comprising:
a ribbon that forms a closed loop along at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility; and
a plurality of supports rigidly coupled to the ribbon, each support adapted to support and transport a single carrier within the at least the portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility[[]] ;
wherein the ribbon comprises:
a vertical portion adapted to support substrate carriers; and
a horizontal portion that extends outward from the vertical portion so as to create a supporting surface adapted to support a weight of the ribbon.

108. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 107 wherein the ribbon is adapted to continuously rotate during transport and delivery of substrate carriers.

109 - 111. (Canceled)

112. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 107 wherein the ribbon comprises stainless steel.

113. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 107 wherein the ribbon comprises a vertical portion having a first feature adapted to identify a beginning of the ribbon.

114. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 113 wherein the vertical portion of the ribbon further comprises a plurality of second features, each second feature adapted to identify a location at which a substrate carrier may be held and transported by the ribbon.

115 - 120. (Canceled)

121. (Original) The conveyor system of claim 107 wherein the ribbon is adapted to transport single substrate carriers.

122 - 164. (Canceled)

165. (Currently Amended) A method of transporting substrate carriers comprising:

forming a closed loop along at least a portion of a semiconductor device manufacturing facility with a ribbon, the ribbon adapted to be flexible in a horizontal plane and rigid in a vertical plane and having:
a vertical portion adapted to support
substrate carriers; and
a horizontal portion that extends
outward from the vertical portion so as to create a
supporting surface adapted to support a weight of the
ribbon; and

transporting a substrate carrier within the at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility with the ribbon.

166 - 167. (Canceled)

168. (Original) The method of claim 165 wherein the ribbon comprises stainless steel.

169. (Original) The method of claim 165 wherein the ribbon comprises a vertical portion having a first feature adapted to identify a beginning of the ribbon.

170. (Original) The method of claim 169 wherein the vertical portion of the ribbon further comprises a plurality of second features, each second feature adapted to identify a location at which a substrate carrier may be held and transported by the ribbon.

171. (Canceled)

172. (Original) The method of claim 165 further comprising rigidly coupling a plurality of supports to the ribbon, each support adapted to support and transport a substrate carrier within the at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility.

173-175. (Canceled)

176. (Original) The method of claim 165 wherein transporting substrate carriers comprises transporting single substrate carriers.

177-184. (Canceled)

185. (New) A conveyor system adapted for use in delivering substrate carriers within a semiconductor device manufacturing facility comprising:

a ribbon that forms a closed loop along at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility, the ribbon adapted to:

- be flexible in a horizontal plane and rigid in a vertical plane; and
- transport a plurality of substrate carriers within the at least a portion of the semiconductor device manufacturing facility;

wherein the ribbon comprises a vertical portion having a first feature adapted to identify a beginning of the ribbon.

186. (New) The conveyor system of claim 185 wherein the first feature comprises at least a first opening formed through the vertical portion.

187. (New) The conveyor system of claim 185 wherein the vertical portion of the ribbon comprises a plurality of second features, each second feature adapted to identify a location at which a substrate carrier may be held and transported by the ribbon.

188. (New) The conveyor system of claim 187 wherein each second feature comprises at least a second opening formed through the vertical portion.

189. (New) The conveyor system of claim 188 wherein the at least a first opening comprises a first plurality of openings and wherein the at least a second opening comprises a second plurality of openings.

190. (New) The conveyor system of claim 185 further comprising a horizontal portion adapted to support a weight of the ribbon;

wherein the vertical portion is further adapted to support substrate carriers.